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18 December 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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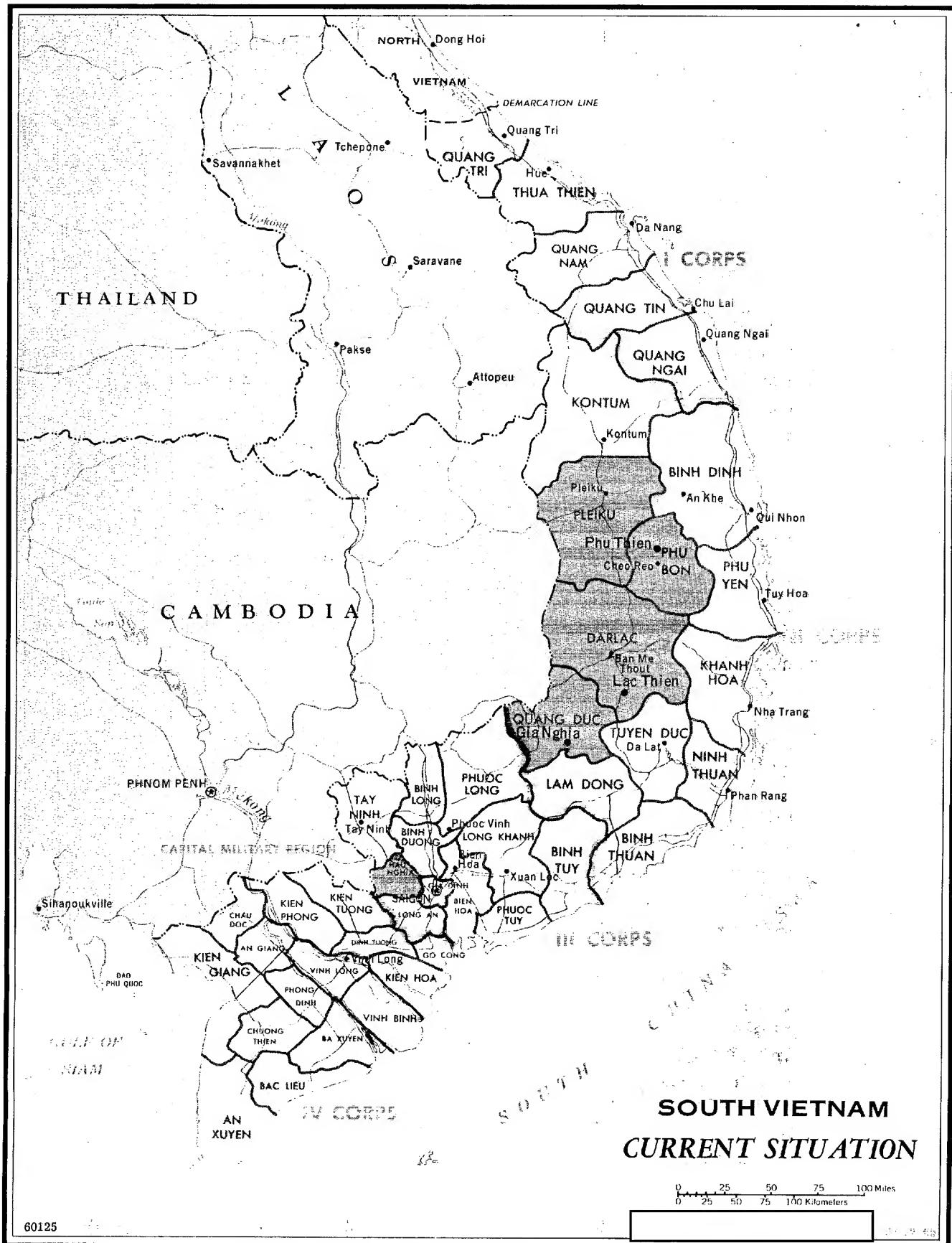
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: Units of the dissident Montagnard tribal organization, FULRO, late yesterday reportedly initiated a new uprising in the South Vietnamese central highlands. They temporarily seized Gia Nghia, the capital of Quang Duc Province, and seriously threatened the district capitals of Phu Thien and Lac Thien, in Phu Bon and Darlac provinces, respectively.

In addition, the rebellious mountain tribesmen extended their revolt to the Vietnamese Special Forces camps at Plei Mrong and Plei Djereng, in Pleiku Province, apparently seizing several US military personnel as hostages. According to unconfirmed reports, Vietnamese government casualties are believed heavy in some areas of conflict.

Late press reports indicate that government forces have reoccupied Gia Nghia, with Montagnard rebels peacefully agreeing to negotiate their long-standing demands for government jobs and more consideration for their needs, including their desire for independence. A similar uprising--in the name of tribal autonomy--occurred in September 1964, when dissident tribesmen revolted in four American-operated Special Forces camps in Darlac Province.

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: The Viet Cong terrorist campaign in the Saigon area continued yesterday; a grenade exploded in a US troop truck and injured 14 Americans, two of them seriously. The previous day, five terrorist incidents in the area resulted in at least 25 casualties, mostly wounded. Last night, two additional grenade explosions were reported in Saigon, but apparently did no damage.

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Enemy forces of estimated battalion strength on 16 December ambushed a Vietnamese army company in Hau Nghia Province, approximately 22 miles northwest of Saigon. Government losses were 50 killed, 21 wounded, 18 missing, and 150 weapons. Viet Cong casualties were unknown.

Communist Political Developments: On 16 December the Soviets delivered an official note to the US Embassy protesting "provocative actions by US military aircraft and vessels against Soviet merchant ships on the high seas, particularly in areas adjacent to Vietnam."

The Soviet protest reflects continuing sensitivity and concern for the security of Russian ships in Southeast Asian waters. Moscow's demarche may have been prompted in part by the recent flurry of press speculation on possible US escalatory steps in Vietnam, including suggestions that some kind of US naval quarantine or blockade of the North Vietnamese coast may be introduced. In similar circumstances, the Soviets issued an almost identical note on 22 February 1965.

Initial Chinese editorial comment on the US air strike against the Uong Bi thermal power plant near Haiphong on 15 December followed routine lines. The Kwangming Daily commentary on 17 December declared that the bombing was "another serious step" taken by the US to escalate the war and that, rather than illustrating US strength, "it accentuates" the "helpless US predicament" in Vietnam.

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Indonesia: There are increasing indications that Sukarno's position vis-a-vis the army is further deteriorating.

The army leaders continue to ignore the President's strictures whenever it suits their convenience. Recent statements by Nasution and Suharto on a wide range of subjects often run counter to Sukarno's expressed views. Army Commander Suharto, in particular, appears to have cowed many members of Sukarno's cabinet, who fear they may be arrested for complicity in the 1 October insurrection. Suharto pointedly has made it clear he will not need presidential authority for such arrests.

Not only are Sukarno's shrill statements ignored by the army, but they are being heavily edited and often distorted by the Indonesian press to bring them into conformity with army views. Even more significantly, the US Embassy reports that Sukarno's public speeches now have little impact on Indonesian audiences.

Sukarno also appears unable to protect his political allies. The left wing of the large Indonesian National Party, which in the past year has enjoyed the President's active support, now appears in danger of a purge by resurgent right wing party elements. Foreign Minister Subandrio is reported to be distressed and nervous and may soon leave the country.

There are also reports that Sukarno may himself go abroad on an extended trip in mid-January. If it should take place, the trip might well be connected with the medical treatment the President is known to need. The embassy has received numerous reports that the Indonesian Government will be reorganized in early January and that Sukarno "will leave the scene" thereafter.

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These reports, however, almost certainly originate from the growing list of Sukarno's political enemies. Even though his present position is probably weaker than ever before, the President has in the past shown a great capacity for political recuperation, and may again find the means to reassert himself.

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UK-Rhodesia-Zambia: [Britain hopes its announcement of an embargo on oil shipments to Rhodesia will forestall an African demand for mandatory economic sanctions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.]

[The African walkout during Prime Minister Wilson's speech at the UN pointed to an early request by the Africans for a Security Council meeting, according to the US Mission in New York. The British action may temporarily head off the application of Chapter VII, which would brand Rhodesia a threat to international peace and place in jeopardy the position of the UK as principal arbiter of the dispute.]

[An oil embargo is unlikely long to assuage the emotions of Africans who demand the early downfall of the Rhodesian Government. Zambia's President Kaunda has been considering broader international involvement in the Zambian-Rhodesian question as a means of simultaneously pressuring the UK and reducing his dependence on London. For this reason he may now be receptive to the International Bank's offer to place a small security force at the Kariba dam. He is also considering the dispatch of delegations to Washington and Moscow for talks about a possible UN force to guard the Kariba power complex if the UK does not accede to his demands for British or Commonwealth troops.]

[A British economic mission in Zambia favors an all-out effort to bolster Zambia's economy, thus permitting Kaunda to gamble on a total embargo on Rhodesian goods and services.]

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Communist China - US: [Statements by the Chinese Communist ambassador at the latest Sino-US talks in Warsaw on 15 December suggest that although Peking is determined to continue its support of North Vietnam, the Chinese do not anticipate any immediate confrontation with the US.]

[Ambassador Wang turned down Ambassador Gronouski's suggestion that because of the critical situation in Vietnam the next meeting should be held in January. Wang stated he would be on home leave and proposed a 16 March date but said a special meeting could be arranged earlier if necessary. He restated the standard Chinese position on all key issues, and declared that the "main dispute" between Communist China and the US was still "US occupation" of Taiwan.]

[Wang repeated public Chinese pronouncements implying that Peking does not wish a war with the US, asserting only that if the US wanted to "impose war on China we are ready to cope with your aggression and we are ready to cope with a war of any size." He underscored earlier Chinese public pledges to help the DRV, stating that Peking will give North Vietnam "unreserved support to whatever extent necessary and with whatever is needed." Wang added that "under no circumstances" could China change this stand and declared that Peking would "never sit idly by" while Laos and Cambodia are "subject to US aggression."]

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Jordan: [King Husayn appears to be nearing a decision to opt for MIG-21s as the solution to his requirement for supersonic fighters.]

[Husayn told the US ambassador on 15 December that he had about reached the "end of the line" in seeking Western aircraft and that he guessed there was no alternative to accepting the MIGs offered by the Egyptians. The King is discouraged because the prices of both French Mirages and British Lightnings exceed the funds he has available from the United Arab Command (UAC) for the expansion of his air force.]

[He has been hopeful of obtaining US assistance to make up the difference, and a Jordanian mission will soon visit Washington in a final effort to obtain help. Husayn would like most of all to have US F-104 fighters, which he has been told are unavailable.]

[The King rejected as impracticable Ambassador Barnes' suggestion that Jordan return to the UAC to seek either more funds or a scaled-down requirement for aircraft. He emphasized that the decisions on how many planes Jordan should acquire had been made at the Arab summit conferences and that the UAC, as a mere staff arm for implementing these decisions, could not make any revisions.]

[Husayn also regarded as hopeless the possibility of approaching Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for help. He pointed out that they were already paying for the Arab military buildup according to price schedules agreed on at the summit meetings.]

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***Dominican Republic:** Dominican military and police forces, aided by a show of strength by the Inter-American Peace Force, appear to have halted almost two days of Communist-led disorder in Santo Domingo.

Street mobs, ostensibly protesting this year's limited Christmas bonus to government employees, began forming again yesterday morning. Impromptu barricades were erected, a number of US-owned vehicles were destroyed, and the streets were littered with debris in the northeastern section of the city.

Although its prestige clearly was at stake, the provisional regime took little action on 16 December to quell disturbances. By yesterday, however, government leaders, convinced that the agitation was predominantly led by Communist elements, ordered the armed forces to restore order.

Many government employees remain on strike for their traditional Christmas bonus, but it appears that extremist elements, spearheaded by the Communist Dominican Popular Movement, have so far had little success in twisting the strike into a widespread repudiation of the Garcia Godoy government. [In fact, several extremist leaders have already eschewed responsibility for this week's violence, which has been strongly condemned by most of the country's political groups and mass media.]

Provisional government officials are said to be optimistic that the strike shortly will run its course. Reports indicate that the striking sugar workers have already come to terms with the government.

NOTES

USSR: Soviet officials in Moscow state that President Nikolay Podgorny has relinquished his duties on the party secretariat. Brezhnev, Shelepin, and Suslov are the only remaining party secretaries who are concurrently full members of the policy-making party presidium. The oft-ailing Suslov has not been considered an active aspirant to the top party post and probably will continue to concentrate primarily on foreign affairs and ideology. Thus, as the Party Congress scheduled for next March approaches, it would appear that Shelepin is in a stronger position than heretofore to influence personnel policy while new party secretary Kapitonov assumes day-to-day responsibility for party personnel appointments.

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Finland: Ambassador Thompson in Helsinki believes President Kekkonen's recent proposal to neutralize northern Scandinavia is a guarded plea to Norway and NATO to avoid military activities which might cause Moscow to call for consultations under terms of the Soviet-Finnish Mutual Assistance Treaty. In Thompson's view, Finland may well be reacting to Soviet nervousness about the new Norwegian Government which was revealed to Foreign Minister Karjalainen during his recent visit to Moscow. Helsinki may also be reacting to Soviet sensitivity to NATO military activities in northern Norway. According to an official announcement, Premier Kosygin has invited Kekkonen to visit the USSR from 19 to 24 December.

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Dahomey - Ivory Coast: All the factions currently competing for power in Dahomey now have representatives in Ivory Coast meeting with President Houphouet-Boigny. He believes that there will have to be a temporary Dahomean Army takeover designed to lead to installation of a "national unity" government headed by

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a civilian not associated with any of the present factions. Emile Zinsou, a fairly moderate, pro-Western intellectual who was Dahomey's foreign minister from 1961 to 1963, appears to be the most likely candidate.⁷

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